



STATE SENATOR  
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IN THE LOOP ★

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### Long-term Energy Plan for Michigan, Now!

Energy is Michigan's "stealth issue." The press rarely touches it. Yet Michigan *IMPORTS* \$18 Billion worth of energy every year and that is a huge economic drain. (Michigan's total energy use costs \$27 Billion per year.) Michigan is leading the way on some emerging technologies on which Sen. Patterson has held numerous public hearings, and yet we never read about that.

The Public Service Commission's Capacity Needs Forum [CNF], appointed last October, released an Interim Report on July 1. It is the *first* such assessment by a state agency in *twenty years*! The CNF states that Michigan has enough energy for now; but by **2009**, at the foreseeable growth rate, Michigan will need *at least one more* energy-generating plant, or we can count on brown-outs and blackouts at peak service times. *That is barely four years off!* Planning, review, and permits all take extended time, let alone construction!

On July 20, Sen. Patterson held a press conference to announce his proposal of a continuing body to advise the Legislature about power needs in advance, so that the state is not caught short. "In an era of term limits, we must approach this crucial problem strategically. The body I propose must be bi-partisan, bi-cameral, forward-thinking. We must take full advantage of research our universities are doing to find alternative energy sources. Otherwise, Michigan will not be vital, or even viable, as a competitor on the world scene; and we must strive for the highest efficiency in use of our precious energy resources," said Patterson.

New York State, which has a similar mix of competition and regulation in the energy market, has a bill now to streamline the siting of new energy plants. This can be a model for us, said Patterson. His remarks in full are located on the Senator's website. (At Web address, <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/> click "News.")

See "*Question of the Hour*" at the end of Page Two.

## **Downriver Corridor Border Crossing proposals cause alarm**

Residents of the Downriver area almost unanimously oppose several proposals to build a new border crossing to Canada. (Whether this is a bridge or a tunnel is not settled yet.) Approaches and highway links would create untold congestion and pollution, as well as destroy historic neighborhoods and valued nature preserves. Sen. Patterson has pledged to de-fund the studies, at least at the state level, to bring such proposals to a halt.

He is working with Downriver colleagues to insure that the Downriver area is excluded from further consideration.

On his web page is a Resolution that you are invited to check out, and sign, if so inclined:

<http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/>

## **Insurance Rates**

“As the author of a major reform bill on Health Insurance (SB 460, of 2003, now Public Act 88), I was very troubled that no articles were written until last week about the huge, dramatic reduction my legislation produced in small market health insurance rate increases,” said Sen. Patterson. Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan announced they have dropped from 14 or 18% annual increases of the past few years, to 4% for 2006. This should have a “ripple effect” throughout the health insurance industry.

Health Savings Accounts are the wave of the future for reducing health care costs, without sacrificing quality. These put the consumer back in control. Unnecessary tests are eliminated, excessive paperwork is controlled; again, the ripple effect brings down prices across the board. An HSA is coupled with a low-cost, high-deductible catastrophic coverage. The owner of the HSA is then able to pay the deductible, and other medical expenses, out of the HSA, while surplus builds in the HSA. Federal tax-free HSAs gain interest, and are inheritable. Where companies have offered them to employees, they have cut costs by 40%, and employees have benefited by seeking preventive care. (“An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure” – a prescription few insurers have followed.) Healthy life-style choices also get a boost this way.

## **Bills to ban Internet Hunting pass Senate**

Three bills to outlaw the use of a computer and mouse to aim a firearm or crossbow by remote control, and shoot a caged animal, are nearing the governor’s desk. Sen. Patterson authored SB 620, part of this package. “This abominable new technique violates the integrity of Michigan’s rich heritage of hunting. Hunting develops a respect for the game that is sought, and a love for the land and our waters. No hunter I know supports this trivializing,” said Patterson. The bills will outlaw the practice in Michigan, and make it illegal to participate in, regardless of where the animal may be located. Other states are also moving in this direction. The other bills are SB 373 and HB 4465.

## **Question of the Hour:**

Remember the Great Blackout of August 14, 2003? Another hot spell could bring a repeat. What do you think about the need for a *long-term energy plan* for Michigan? What should be included? Please ask if you would like them, and we will send some Energy tips for your use.

**“Poems For The Road” -- and back to School – Remember these?**

Yet a few more of those rhymes of yesteryear to enliven your summer road trips... You can share them with kids who won't remember the series of red and white sign boards we used to enjoy... Some were written, it is said, by Jessie W. Murton, sometime Michigan Poet Laureate.

BROTHER SPEEDER  
LET'S REHEARSE  
ALL TOGETHER  
GOOD MORNING, NURSE  
*Burma Shave*

CAUTIOUS RIDER  
TO HER RECKLESS DEAR  
LET'S HAVE LESS BULL  
AND MORE STEER  
*Burma Shave*

CAR IN DITCH  
DRIVER IN TREE  
THE MOON WAS FULL  
AND SO WAS HE.  
*Burma Shave*

PASSING SCHOOL ZONE  
TAKE IT SLOW  
LET OUR LITTLE  
SHAVERS GROW.  
*Burma Shave*

Enjoy beautiful Michigan's gorgeous scenery this season, and next, – *safely!*

**Contact Information**

Thank you for your interest in our current state issues. If you would like to receive future updates via e-mail, please contact my office at < [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) >. You can also visit me in my Lansing office at 505 Farnum Building, just across S. Capitol Avenue from the state Capitol; or you can send me mail at P. O. Box 30036, Lansing, MI 48909. Telephone (517) 373-7350 or (866) 262-7307; fax (517) 373-9228. I want to hear from you.